



Bellingen Shire
COUNCIL



Companion Animals Management Plan 2016



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INTRODUCTION

The term Companion Animal (CA) describes assistance animals, pet dogs and cats and, to some extent, working dogs. The term 'companion' was selected to reflect the focus of animal and community welfare in the *Companion Animals Act 1998* (CAA).

Companion Animals are an integral part of our community, culture and society. Our compassion for living things is reflected in the manner in which we treat animals; this means that the ownership of companion animals is to be considered a privilege. This privilege comes with a range of responsibilities in relation to the animal(s), the community, and the environment. The Companion Animals Management Plan (CAMP) sets out these responsibilities in light of the current legislative framework.



Aim

Council is seeking to achieve the following objectives through this Management Plan:

- To encourage our residents and visitors to properly care for all pets
- To encourage the permanent microchip identification and lifetime registration of all companion animals in Bellinghen LGA
- To manage CA issues and encourage responsible pet ownership via education and increased awareness of services and provisions available
- To provide CA owners with support, education, facilities and regulatory framework to accommodate their pets within the broader community and environment
- To identify and prioritise current and future animal management issues
- To develop action plans designed to address animal management issues

Benefits to Council and Community

Other Councils which have adopted a CAMP report a wide range of benefits, including (but not limited to):

- A reduction in the number of complaints being received due to an increased community awareness of the responsibilities of pet owners
- The provision of guidance, support and procedures to groups that are involved with CA
- The use of community education programmes to more effectively target the concerns of pet owners who may lack knowledge and an awareness of their actions
- The provision of a network to link the community with CA and animal welfare issues

Statement for Companion Animals Management

The Companion Animals Management Plan for Bellingen Shire Council has been developed to provide the following social and environmental outcomes:

- To identify and manage CA issues effectively
- To increase voluntary compliance of pet owner requirements under the CAA
- To encourage best practice in animal welfare
- To achieve an equitable balance between pet and non-pet owners, the environment and native wildlife in accordance with relevant legislation

Objectives for Companion Animals Management

The objectives of this CAMP are:

- To encourage the permanent microchip identification and lifetime registration of all CA in the Bellingen LGA
- To encourage CA owners to provide appropriate physical and mental challenges for their animals, to improve animal welfare and reduce adverse impacts on the wider community
- To improve community awareness of the importance of reporting incidents involving CA
- To ensure an efficient and effective response to reported dog attacks
- To improve the CA owners' awareness of their responsibility to maintain an effective control over their animals in public places
- To raise the awareness of CA owners of their responsibility to minimise the noise pollution caused by their animals
- To minimise the impact of CA and their faeces on water catchments
- To raise awareness and minimise the potential impact of CA on biodiversity
- To review current off-leash facilities throughout the Bellingen LGA
- To provide more appropriate facilities and infrastructure around off-leash areas for dog exercise throughout the Bellingen LGA
- To enhance the existing pound facilities to encourage best practice care for impounded animals

The statement and objectives of the CAMP will be identified under four primary headings:

- Animal issues;
- Community issues;
- Environmental issues; and
- Action plans, monitoring and review.

Background

The *Companion Animals Act 1998* (CAA) establishes the requirements for the care, control and management of both dogs and cats, whilst addressing a wider range of issues including environmental impacts, removal of dog faeces, issues surrounding on and off-leash areas, and barking dog complaints.

Companion animals are often the cause of conflict between neighbours, and the actions and responses by Council attract interest from both pet owners and non-pet owners alike.

Recently, the State Government has responded to a number of serious dog attack incidents by strengthening the laws relating to the ownership of restricted, menacing and dangerous dogs. These requirements have added to the responsibilities of the Council, and, in particular, the regulatory staff that are dealing with these matters.

Reliance on legislation will likely remain the backbone of CA management however there is now increasing emphasis on the development of non-regulatory approaches such as community education programs.



DEFINITIONS

Authorised Officer	(a) an employee of a local authority authorised by the local authority for the purposes of the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> , or (b) a police officer.
Cat	an animal of the species <i>Felis catus</i> , whether or not domesticated.
Companion Animal	means each of the following: (a) a dog (b) a cat (c) any other animal that is prescribed by the regulations as a companion animal.
Council	Bellingen Shire Council
Council Pound	(a) the pound established by Council under the <i>Impounding Act 1993</i> , or (b) any other place approved by Council as a place for the holding of animals for the purposes of this Act.
Dangerous Dog	a dog for the time being the subject of a declaration by an authorised officer of Council or a court under the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> that the dog is dangerous.
Desexed	rendered permanently incapable of reproduction.
Director-General	Director-General of the Department of Local Government.
Dog	animal (of either sex, or desexed) of the species <i>Canis familiaris</i> , whether or not domesticated.
Feral Cat	an unowned cat.
Function	includes a power, authority and duty.
Menacing dog	a dog for the time being the subject of a declaration by an authorised officer of Council or a court under the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> that the dog is menacing.
Nuisance Cat	defined in Section 31 of the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i>
Nuisance Dog	defined in Section 21 of the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i>
Owner	defined in Section 7 of the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i>
Public Place	(a) any pathway, road, bridge, reserve, park or garden, and (b) any other place, which the public are entitled to use.
Register	register of Companion Animals.
Registered	registered under the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i>
Restricted dog	defined in section 55 of the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i>

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to:

- Council employees
- Councillors
- Community members
- Community groups

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Related documents, policies and legislation:

- *The Companion Animals Act 1998*
- *The Companion Animals Regulation 2008*
- *The Impounding Act 1993*
- *The Local Government Act 1993*
- 2011 Guidelines on the Exercise of Functions under the Companion Animals Act



ANIMAL ISSUES

Registration and Identification of Companion Animals (Sections 8 & 9 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*)

The registration, and therefore, identification of companion animals is a crucial component that underlies funding management, education and enforcement programs. Registers are also critical as databases to assist in returning lost pets, identifying offending animals, and as a way of communicating with pet owners.

Under the Act a CA must be microchipped from 12 weeks of age. A CA must be registered from 6 months of age.

Any change of ownership of a CA requires the animal to be microchipped. Owners are required to notify a change of address to their local Council so that the NSW Companion Animals Register can be updated. Obviously, it is important for the Register to be kept up-to-date so that lost or impounded animals can be safely and quickly returned to their owners.

Goals

- To encourage the permanent microchip identification of all animals in the Bellingen LGA, in order to facilitate the prompt return of lost or roaming CA to their owners
- To encourage the statewide lifetime registration of all CA in the Bellingen LGA in accordance with the CAA
- To provide an effective and efficient service for people updating or registering details on the NSW Companion Animal Register

Impounding

The CAA outlines the procedure for dealing with seized or surrendered animals. Part 7 of the CAA deals with the following issues:

- Interpretation of the legislation
- Delivery of seized animals must be to owner, Council pound or approved premises
- Owner of seized or surrendered animal to be notified
- Seized animals to be detained at approved premises
- Unclaimed seized animal may be sold or destroyed
- Surrendered animals may be sold or destroyed
- Fees and charges payable when animal detained or held
- Owner not entitled to compensation for sale of animal
- Recovery of fees and charges when animal destroyed
- Reporting on pound activities
- Offence of rescuing seized animal
- Protection of Council and Council officers

Council responds to complaints and actively patrols for animals straying in public places. When an animal is seized by a Ranger, the following actions are taken:

- The animal is scanned for identification (microchip);
- The contact details are accessed from the Register;
- Contact with the owner is attempted;
- The animal is returned to the owner's address if they are in residence; or,
- The animal is transported to the pound facility, in accordance with the legislation.

There are a number of issues inherent in the current animal management situation. These include, but are not limited to:

- The difficulties often involved in returning CA to their owners. Often owners are either not contactable, not at home or have changed their address;
- The concern for disease transmission and stress factors on the animals when they are impounded; and
- The potential for high numbers of animals to be euthanised when they are unclaimed or determined to be unsuitable for resale/rehome.

Goals

The overarching goals of the CAMP for Bellingen Shire are:

- To facilitate the prompt return of animals to their owners, and reduce the number of animals that need to be impounded;
- To further investigate upgrading of existing, or provision of new, Pound facilities, so that a best practice management procedure can be used for the transport and care of seized animals; and
- To minimise the potential for animals to be euthanised.

The latter objective is intrinsic to the management of companion animals in Bellingen Shire LGA. Where possible, Council aims to return CA to their owners, or to rehouse those animals which have been surrendered to the pound. Only in situations where rehousing is not possible for reasons of suitability or temperament, will euthanasia be considered as a management option.

Animal Welfare & Responsible Pet Ownership

All people who have animals in their care have a responsibility to ensure that they have suitable knowledge and skills to provide adequate welfare for these animals. Owners of CA have an obligation to seek assistance, where necessary, to fulfil the requisite duty of care for animals in their charge. This is called responsible pet ownership and may include the following:

- Attending to the pet's health and welfare including exercise, training and environmental enrichment as appropriate to the breed of animal
- Confining dogs within the perimeter of the home to prevent roaming
- Minimising any adverse effects upon neighbours, such as excessive barking
- Complying with relevant legislation (leash laws, removal of faeces from public places, maintaining dogs under effective control)

Educational programs directed at the community of this region have the potential to raise awareness of the need for responsible pet ownership and what this entails. Some examples are:

- **Appropriate pet selection** - Problems can be avoided by selecting the type of animal, breed and sex to suit the owner's lifestyle and circumstances.
- **Basic health and welfare principles** - Regular exercise, proper nutrition, water and shelter are crucial to the maintenance of animal health.
- **Desexing** - This is a critical issue and has the capacity to reduce several unwanted animal behaviours, including unwanted litters, roaming and potential territorial aggression and noise complaints. Desexing is encouraged under the CAA, by having a discounted registration fee for desexed CA.
- **Secure confinement and environmental enrichment** - Confining an animal reduces its risk of serious harm or death. In addition, while this practice must be followed, there is the consideration of combatting the boredom and frustrations that pets may feel while their owner is absent. Environmental enrichment is the inclusion of cognitive, dietary, physical, sensory and social stimuli to relieve boredom and frustration. If an animal is kept busy, it is less frustrated, less reactive and less of a potential nuisance (e.g. barking and/or roaming).
- **Socialisation, training and commitment** - Early socialisation of CA is important to allow exposure to many different stimuli in the local environment. Dog training is encouraged to ensure that owners have control of CA in public and private places.

Goals

- To encourage further education regarding responsible pet ownership with the community
- To promote the desexing of CA
- To encourage CA owners to provide mental and physical challenges for their animals to improve the welfare of their animals and to reduce negative impacts on the local community



COMMUNITY ISSUES

Conflict between humans and animals is often inevitable, particularly when neighbouring dwellings are in close proximity to each other. The type of issues most commonly raised through Customer Service Requests relate to:

- Barking dogs
- Roaming cats/dogs
- Attacking dogs

Public Safety

Community safety is a high priority, and in particular, the safety of persons whilst in public places. In considering this, it is important to understand the reason why dogs won't necessarily behave in the same way in the neutral territory of a public place or park as they would when at home. Attacks on private property frequently occur when a dominant, protective, or injured dog is not adequately supervised when with children or visitors. These triggers are not present in the neutral territory of a public park when a dog is with its owner. Most of the data collected on this issue suggests that dog attacks are more likely to occur in and around the family home or another home.

The general responsibilities of owners when their dogs are in public places are stated in sections 12 and 13 of the CAA. In summary, dog owners are required to have their animal under the effective control of a competent person by means of an adequate chain, cord or leash when in public places. Council is required to provide at least 1 leash-free area, however, people using these facilities must have control of their animals. There are currently three designated off-leash areas within the Bellingen LGA:

- **Dorrigo:** Polocrosse fields in Ash Street
- **Bellingen:** Jarrett Park west of Lavenders Bridge
- **Urunga:** The beach south of the river mouth to the four-wheel-drive access point known as 'Sand mines'

Public Places Where Dogs Are Excluded (Section 14 *Companion Animals Act 1998*)

Under the Act dogs are prohibited in the following public places:

- In or within 10m of any children's play areas;
- Food preparation or consumption areas (unless it is in a public thoroughfare such as a road, footpath or pathway);
- Recreation areas where dogs are declared prohibited;
- School grounds (unless with the permission of the person controlling the school);

- Child care centres (unless with the permission of the person controlling the centre);
- Shopping areas where dogs are prohibited (unless secured in a vehicle, with the permission of the person controlling the place or going to or from a vet or pet shop); and,
- Wildlife protection areas.

Council can also elect to prohibit dogs from particular recreation areas, public bathing areas, and shopping centres.

Dogs are **prohibited** by Council in the following areas:

- All public beaches unless otherwise signposted
- As indicated by Council signage in various areas

Outdoor Dining Areas (Sec 14A Companion Animals Act 1998)

In summary, dogs may be allowed in outdoor dining areas, in certain circumstances, under Section 14A of the Act. Dogs are generally not prohibited with the permission of the restaurateur, in outdoor dining areas as long as:

- The dog is under the effective control of some competent person and is restrained by means of an adequate chain, cord or leash that is attached to the dog, and the person does not feed the dog or permit the dog to be fed; and,
- The dog is kept on the ground.

Nuisance Dogs (Section 21 Companion Animals Act 1998)

Under Section 21 of the Act a dog is defined as a nuisance if it:

- Is habitually at large;
- Makes a noise by barking or otherwise, that persistently occurs or continues to such a degree or extent that it unreasonably interferes with the peace, comfort or convenience of any person in any other premises;
- Repeatedly defecates on another person's property;
- Repeatedly chases any person, animal or vehicle;
- Endangers the health of any person or animal; or,
- Repeatedly causes substantial damage to anything outside the property on which it is ordinarily kept

There has been a rise in complaints about barking dogs made to Bellingen Shire Council over recent years. This increase appears to be consistent with the experience of councils in other areas. Such complaints are often not easy to resolve and frequently consume large amounts of Council time. Council's Rangers have established a procedure to be followed in order to determine the veracity and extent of a barking dog problem. When taken at face value, the nuisance dog provisions of the Act seem straightforward to administer. However, in practice they are hard to enforce, given that nuisance problems are often difficult to define and measure. The words 'repeatedly' and 'habitually' are important in determining whether a nuisance exists.

Menacing Dogs

(Sections 34 & 51 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*)

Council can declare a dog kept within its area to be a Menacing Dog. Once a dog is declared menacing, the owner must comply with the conditions specified in Section 51 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*. Such conditions include amongst others:

- It must be desexed and registered;
- The owner must ensure that the dog is under the control of a competent person (over the age of 18 years old) and is leashed and muzzled at all times when it is outside the property where it is normally kept;
- The dog must at all times wear a distinctive collar;
- The owners are also required to notify the relevant councils when the dog is moved to new premises; and,
- When a dog is declared menacing, Council must enter the details in a Menacing Dog Register and notify the Department of Local Government of the Order.

Dangerous Dogs & Restricted Breeds

(Sections 34 & 51 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*)

Council can declare a dog kept within its area to be a Dangerous Dog. Once a dog is declared dangerous, the owner must comply with the conditions specified in Section 51 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*. Such conditions include amongst others:

- It must be desexed and registered;
- It must be kept in an enclosure (designed to prevent children having access);

Note: A certificate of compliance in relation to the prescribed enclosure must be obtained by the owner of the dog from Council.

- The owner must ensure that the dog is under the control of a competent person (over the age of 18 years old) and is leashed and muzzled at all times when it is outside the property where it is normally kept;

- The dog must at all times wear a distinctive collar;
- The owners are also required to notify the relevant councils when the dog is moved to new premises; and,
- When a dog is declared dangerous, Council must enter the details in a Dangerous Dog Register and notify the Department of Local Government of the Order.

Dog Attacks

Offences relating to dog attacks are broadly defined under the CAA. An offence occurs if a dog rushes at, bites, harasses or chases any person or animal (other than vermin), whether or not any injury is caused. It is not an offence if the dog is provoked by teasing, is being mistreated, or is attacked, or as a result of the person or animal trespassing on the property on which the dog was being kept, or as a result of the dog acting in reasonable defence of a person or property. Victim and witness statements received by Council on an alleged dog attack will be assessed on their merits to determine the nature of any enforcement action.

Restricted Dog Breeds (Sections 55 & 56 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*)

The following breeds are defined in the Act as Restricted Dogs:

- Pit Bull Terriers;
- American Pit Bull Terriers;
- Japanese Tosas;
- Argentinian Fighting Dogs;
- Brazilian Fighting Dogs; and
- Any other dog of a breed, kind or description prescribed by the regulations as restricted for the purposes of this Division (e.g. dogs used as guard dogs by security personnel could be prescribed as restricted dogs).

The owner of a restricted dog must also comply with specified conditions including keeping the dog in a childproof enclosure.

Goals

- To conduct further research in establishing more appropriate leash-free areas throughout the LGA
- To improve community awareness of the importance of safety around CA and methods of reporting incidents involving CA

- To promote the awareness of dog training and keeping dogs under effective control at all times
- To monitor dangerous/menacing/restricted dogs throughout the Bellingen LGA

Enforcement & Education

The on-going debate in contemporary animal management revolves about the relative merits of enforcement versus education. Whilst it appears that legislation will always be the backbone of the management method, the strengths of taking a regulatory approach should not blind us to its shortcomings. A regulatory approach on its own is inherently inefficient because of its focus on means rather than ends, and because it consumes significant resources in maintaining an enforcement presence for benefits that are not always assured.

By contrast, voluntary compliance will provide more meaningful, lasting changes in behaviour. The effectiveness of animal control depends more on overcoming ignorance, indifference, and incompetence, than in prescribing concrete forms of acceptable behaviour. Changes in behaviour which occur through education usually are slow to occur, can be expensive, and are often difficult to evaluate.

Since the CAA was introduced, community attitudes and awareness have changed appreciably in a number of areas, specifically:

- Cleaning up after dogs in public places – more people carry bags with them when they walk their dog to clean up and dispose of their pet's faeces
- Not allowing dogs to roam in public places whilst not under the control of a responsible person
- Confining cats inside their residence at night to prevent them from roaming and hunting local wildlife. This practice also stops pets from being attacked by feral or other cats thus reducing the risk of injury and disease

It is therefore considered imperative that the Council has regard for approaches that take advantage of the individual strengths of both the legal and educative means for improving CA Management within the LGA.

Target groups for raising awareness may include:

- CA owners;
- Non-pet owners;
- Schools/Pre-schools;
- New pet owners;
- Streets/localities with ongoing CA issues; or
- Community groups

Possible future education opportunities:

- Public safety, methods for reporting
- Barking dogs
- Desexing
- Responsible pet ownership

- Appropriate pet selection
- Disaster preparedness
- Roaming dogs
- Identification and registration
- Early socialisation and regular obedience training
- Environmental enhancement
- Interaction between CA and native animals
- Environmental protection

Goals

- To promote the importance of reporting incidents involving CA
- To encourage the training and education of CA to facilitate their integration into the community
- To promote changes in the behaviour of CA owners through education about the responsibilities of being a CA owner



ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Companion animals can adversely affect the environment in a number of ways; some of these impacts include noise pollution, water pollution, faecal pollution, and predation or attacks on native fauna. It is hoped that by educating the owners of CA to take responsibility for their animals, this will help the owner to manage their animal's activities in order to minimise their impact on the surrounding environment.

Noise Pollution

In relation to CAs, the predominant form of noise pollution arises from barking dogs. Council's Rangers spend a considerable amount of time dealing with complaints about barking dogs. Ranger Services have developed a standard procedure to guide the investigation of such complaints and have recently drafted Barking Dog information and an educational kit, available on Council's website and at Council's Customer Service Centre.

Cats can also be the cause of noise complaints when they fight at night. Council encourages cat owners to confine their pets indoors or in suitable cat enclosures at night to reduce the incidence of fighting and to keep their pets safe. It is extremely difficult for the Rangers to deal effectively with this type of problem hence the education of owners is seen as the best approach.

Goals

- To educate the community and mitigate excessive barking
- To raise awareness of means to curb excessive barking and other noise
- To resolve barking complaints in an effective and timely manner



Water and Faecal Pollution

The management of faeces deposited by CA is a significant environmental and public health issue. The pollution of urban yards, footpaths, parks and reserves by animal faeces and the resulting pollution of waterways by stormwater run-off are of great environmental concern throughout the Bellingen LGA. Animal droppings contribute to high levels of phosphorous and other potentially harmful chemicals/bacteria in our waterways.

Organisms such as parasites, protozoa and bacteria can be transferred to people and animals via faecal matter and contaminated stormwater. There is also the potential for infection to be passed to humans from the animals themselves. Roundworm is the primary health concern, as this organism resides in the small intestine of dogs, and its eggs are passed to the outside environment in the faeces. The eggs may remain infective in the soil for a number of years.

While humans do not develop adult roundworm, the migration of the larvae through tissues and organs can cause disease. Young children, active sports players and people confined to hand-activated wheel chairs have the greatest risks of exposure. At present, there is no legal requirement to remove cat faeces from a public place, although it is recommended.

To counteract the problem of companion animal faeces spoiling our public places & entering the water systems, Council is committed to;

- Educating pet owners to clean up after their pets and to dispose of the waste into the rubbish system; and
- Providing waste bins clean up bags at parks and reserves where owners can dispose of their pet's droppings.

Goals

- To minimise the impact of CA's on surface water sources throughout the Bellingen LGA
- To install rubbish receptacles in leash-free areas with signage stating their purpose for animal waste
- To educate the community about the responsibilities of CA owners to remove their animal faeces from public places

Reduction to Biodiversity – Native Animals

Biodiversity can be described as 'the variety of life'. It includes plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes that they contain and the range of ecosystems that they form, on land, in the ocean and river systems. In NSW today, nearly 1000 species of plants and animals and the ecosystems these inhabit are listed as threatened under the definitions provided in the *NSW Threatened Species and Conservation Act 1995* or the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. It is vital that CA strategies be implemented to assist in the protection of these threatened environmental systems.

Of particular importance in Bellingen Shire is the interaction between dogs and koalas. Council is developing for adoption a Koala Plan of Management for the Coastal Areas of the Shire that

acknowledges this threat to koalas and proposes a series of management actions that will require the involvement of Council's Rangers.

This would include, for example, targeted compliance actions in high risk areas to ensure that dogs are not roaming, particularly during breeding seasons when koala movements are increased. Owner education and the provision of appropriate off-leash areas will also limit conflict between dogs & koalas.

Community education programs should be implemented to emphasise that the dumping of unwanted animals in bushland or nature reserves is irresponsible, environmentally destructive and illegal. As well as feral cats, free-ranging domestic cats are responsible for a significant number of wildlife deaths each year. It is imperative that awareness be raised regarding the care and control of pet cats, to limit their nocturnal wanderings. Cats can be confined to a house for their entire life, if there is sufficient environmental stimulus.

Goals

- To minimise the impact of CA's on biodiversity within the Bellingen LGA
- To educate owners of cats about methods of safely confining their animals to the home
- To promote the desexing of CA's to reduce roaming and aggressive behaviours
- To reduce the threat to koalas from dogs in the shire and implement relevant parts of the Bellingen Shire Coastal Area Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management.



Example of Koala injured by dog attack and educational signage erected at Bellingen cemetery

Photos: Anthony Heidemann & Mick Cooper

ACTION PLANS,

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Council aims to monitor, review and continually improve the management of CA within the Bellingen LGA. As well as giving an indication of the success of particular action plans, performance indicators serve as monitoring mechanisms which should allow for the action plans to modify and improve aspects of strategies that prove to be ineffective.

A working group of key stakeholders should be established to allow for both transparency and diversity in the development and implementation of strategic goals set out in the action plans. This group will also serve to monitor the progress of the plan and suggest future changes that may be required.

In addition to ongoing monitoring, the Companion Animals Management Plan and subsequent action plans should be reviewed every three years after adoption.



ACTION PLAN 1 - REGISTRATION & IDENTIFICATION

The identification and registration of pets is important as it:

- assists Council with animal control;
- enables the identification of lost pets and facilitates contacting owners; and
- is a source of funding for animal management activities.

ACTION	PRIORITY	RELATED GOALS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Educate the community about the importance of microchipping and registration of CA	High	Encourage the voluntary identification of all CA Allow for the prompt return of animals found wandering/unattended Provide efficient service for updating details and registration on the NSW Companion Animals Register	Increase in the number of CA being identified and registered Increase in the number of CA being returned to owner in the first instance Production of materials advertising the importance of identification and registration

ACTION PLAN 2 - DOGS IN PUBLIC PLACES

- All dogs in public places must be under the control of their owners.

Dogs are prohibited in the following public spaces:

- Within 10m of any children's play areas.
- Recreation areas where dogs are declared prohibited.
- School grounds
- Areas where dogs have been deemed likely to have a significant impact on local flora or fauna.

Council has designated several off-leash dog exercise areas across the Shire

- Dog owners educated to remove and dispose of their pets' faeces for environmental, health and amenity reasons.
- Roaming dogs must be effectively managed and owners educated about dogs when in a public area other than an in approved off-leash area. Specifically, owners must ensure that their dogs are under the effective control of a competent person by means of an adequate chain, cord or leash, that is attached to the dog and that is being held by (or secured to) the person.

ACTION	PRIORITY	RELATED GOALS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<p>To provide appropriately located and well utilised off-leash exercise areas</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Undertake a review of current off-leash areas regarding usage, location, suitability and effectiveness of facilities</p> <p>Investigate the use of other facilities for CA in suitable areas</p> <p>Integration of infrastructure including effective educational and regulatory signage</p>	<p>Establishment of effectively located off-leash areas</p> <p>Number of people using off-leash areas</p>
<p>Introduce controls that identify areas where CA are prohibited</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Consideration of public areas from which CA should be prohibited</p> <p>Appropriate regulatory signage in prohibited areas</p> <p>Enforcement of protected/prohibited areas</p>	<p>Establishment of protected/prohibited areas</p> <p>Education and enforcement action taken</p>
<p>Educate and enforce leash provisions in public areas</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Publicity campaigns to educate CA owners of their responsibilities and leash provisions</p> <p>Enforcement of legislation relating to off-leash dogs in public areas</p>	<p>Production of public campaigns</p> <p>Reduced complaints regarding CA off-leash in public areas</p>

ACTION PLAN 3 - BARKING DOGS

- Nuisance dog barking affects the amenity of an area, giving rise to complaints to Council which are difficult and time-consuming to resolve.
- Council's Rangers have adopted a set procedure to deal with barking dog issues involving discussing the problem with the offending owners and sending the complainant the Council's Barking Dog Information Pack, in the first instance.
- Providing advice to owners about strategies to overcome excessive barking i.e. specialised training, citronella collars, changes to dog's behaviour.

ACTION	PRIORITY	RELATED GOALS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<p>Educate the community about the provisions of the Companion Animals Act and appropriate actions to be taken in the event of excessive barking</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Disseminate information regarding control measures to owners of CA that may be subject to complaints</p> <p>Provide customers with information regarding the nature of investigation and limited action Council can take in the event of excessive barking</p> <p>Provide information on resources available to complainants such as noise abatement orders or referral to CJC</p>	<p>Number and severity of incidents reduced</p> <p>Voluntary actions taken to curb excessive barking</p>

ACTION PLAN 4 - CAT MANAGEMENT

- Cats are required to be identified and registered under the Companion Animals Act.
- Council can prohibit cats from entering specified public places.
- Public education programs are required to inform cat owners about:
 - the need to identify & register their pets;
 - responsible cat ownership; and
 - the damage cats can cause to native wildlife.

ACTION	PRIOTITY	RELATED GOALS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Educate the community about the need to identify and register cats	High	Development of public education campaign	Implementation of education campaign
Educate the community about the importance of reducing the impact of cats on native wildlife	Medium	Develop education program highlighting the importance of containing cats at night	Implementation of education programme Reduction in effects on wildlife

ACTION PLAN 5 - PROVISION OF FACILITIES

- Council is required to make provisions for the operation of an Animal Shelter to receive lost/impounded dogs and cats.

ACTION	PRIORITY	RELATED GOALS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Provision of a well maintained and managed animal impounding facility for receipt of stray and lost animals	High	Investigate the provision of new/upgraded impounding facilities Work to implement guidelines set out in the “Draft Code of Practice for Pounds & Shelters”	Physical upgrade to existing facilities
Ensure Council staff are trained to handle CA and provide advice to CA owners	High	Provide opportunities for external training to ensure best practice and ongoing career enhancement	Provision and completion of courses

ACTION PLAN 6 – EDUCATION

- Educating pet owners is the key to successful implementation of the Act. Educating non pet owners is also an important consideration. The Companion Animals Advisory Board oversees State-wide education and publicity campaigns.
- The state-wide and local education and publicity campaigns must be co-coordinated to achieve maximum impact.

ACTION	PRIORITY	RELATED GOALS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Provide community education targeted at CA owners' rights and responsibilities	High	Ongoing development and implementation of education programs targeted at ongoing voluntary compliance with CAA	Reduced number of complaints received regarding CA

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ACTION PLAN 7 – ENFORCEMENT

- Council's Rangers enforce the provisions of the Companion Animals Act.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RELATED GOALS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Provide an effective animal management service to the community through timely response to reported incidents and pro-active patrolling of identified areas	High	Identification and targeted patrols of areas with high incidence of non-compliance Implementation of recorded patrol logs Development of procedure for issuing and recording warning notices	Increased voluntary compliance through pro-active patrolling Issuing of PN and warning notices

ACTION PLAN 8 – FUNDING

- The additional responsibilities on Council resulting from the introduction of the Companion Animals Act will require funding over and above the funds received from registrations and fines.
- Council will continue to monitor the quantity of additional funding and how these funds are to be provided.

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RELATED GOALS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
To allocate funding revenue raised from fines issued under the Companion Animals Act and CA registration back into activities associated with CA	High	Provide a funded Ranger service to the Shire, commensurate with the population, demand for services, and the financial capacity of the Council	Ongoing provision of effective animal management services to the community